Savage Grace

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Savage Grace

by BadTiming

Summary

"You think you're in love with me." Will chuckles, a bitter chuckle devoid of mirth.

"Chiyoh thinks I'm in love with you. Bedelia was bitterly jealous of you. Both remarkable creatures. I prefer the company of the extraordinary to the mundane." Hannibal's able fingers tangle some more in Will's hair. Shivers run down Will's spine. He feels like a dog, being petted by its master and rejoicing in this feeling that he belongs to someone, to something. Even if in Will's case, he belongs to Satan himself. He pushes his head further in the caress. Hannibal hums softly in agreement.

"Is that why you don't eat them?" Will asks, pressing his cheek into the rough wool of Hannibal's pants. Even when he steals clothes, Hannibal always dresses impeccably, it seems. The pants smell of Hannibal, a dark fragrant musk. For all he knows, Hannibal changed in his own clothes when Chiyoh procured the car for them. It doesn't matter. The smell is divine, soothing for the memories it contains and exciting at the same time.

"It's apparently why I cannot bring myself to eat you."

Or

Missing scenes from Digestivo.

Notes

This is my first fic for Hannibal. Hasn't been beta-ed so I apologize in advance for any mistakes, they are all mine. I took liberties in regards to the effects of whatever drug Cordell might have injected Will with because work of fiction and all that jazz.

The concept of Kintsugi (also known as Kintsukuroi) was inspired by a Hannibal post I saw floating about on Tumblr. Hopefully I don't butcher this cultural tradition too much. All the rest is the product of my over-active imagination.

Feedback and comments are like Will to my Hannibal.

The pain is excruciating.

Will Graham is surprised at how much it really hurts to have one's face sliced into. It almost hurts more than when Hannibal gutted him. Perhaps it's the fact that he's alone, this time. That Hannibal is not there to hold him up, to caress his hair in a simile of genuine concern. Or perhaps it's the fact that he's been thrown off a train, shot at, sawed into, all in the last forty-eight hours. The fact that he's fucking exhausted.

The pain is excruciating and Will cannot even bring himself to scream. All of Will's thoughts are centered on the fact his face must be damned if psychopaths want so badly to cut into it.

You're gonna eat him. With my face.

Will would laugh if he could. If he cared. If the last year of his life did not feel so surreal, like a perpetual bad dream he cannot wake from. Lucid dreaming and sleep paralysis all wrapped into one dark, terrifying package. And yet there have been moments of such clarity, mostly brought on by the friction of him and Hannibal, colliding like two great storms, melting into one another to create perfect chaos.

Cordell is gloating. *Textbook sadist. Failed doctor. Never did pass the interviews. He'll probably botch up the job, damage some important nerve endings and give Mason a fucked-up face. At this point, anything would be an improvement, considering the mess that is currently Mason Verger's face. So Will doesn't really care. By the time Cordell is done, he'll be dead, or Cordell will be, at the hands of Hannibal.*

There's no more fight left in Will. He dropped his forgiveness and his will to fight back in Florence, outside the Uffizi. The teacup has shattered; the pieces have been crushed repeatedly. There's only dust left.

All Will can do right now is wait patiently for death. Whether it be at Cordell's hand or Hannibal's. It doesn't matter all that much anymore. He trusts Alana to do her best to pull him out of this situation. She's angry. At him. At Hannibal. Mostly at herself for not seeing what was right in her face and on her plate. She feels betrayed. Jack told her about the damn phone call and she thinks that Will sealed her fate by warning Hannibal. Will gets that. He does. But he also knows that Alana is at heart a good person. And while she may wish to see Hannibal bleed, as if that could magically expunge her self-hatred and anger, she has no ill-wishes towards Will. She's always been fiercely protective of him. He doesn't know how well she understands Hannibal. Doesn't know if she realizes that she might have traded his fate at Cordell's hands for an equally grim one at Hannibal's.

It doesn't matter.

Will wishes he could close his eyes. The lights in the room are harsh and he really can't be bothered with staring at his tormentor. Will can hear the slushing noise of the scalpel digging into his skin. It feels like it's been hours. Time loops. Mason Verger is making a wheezing noise in the next chair, almost like a snore around the tubes shoved down his throat. Even sedated, the man is barely a step up from trash. Tears run down Will's face. He'd laugh if he

could. He's envisioned death so many times, felt it in the most intimate manners possible. And yet he could have never predicted that he'd die lying next to a wheezing disfigured sadistic pedophile who makes dick jokes at his dinner table with his would-be meal.

"It's a pity Mason doesn't want to eat you." Cordell's voice. Will wishes he'd just shut the fuck up and get on with it. "I'd have loved to cut into that gorgeous little body of yours. Dr Lecter's left you with quite the scar hasn't he…" Cordell hisses. Will just stares blankly ahead. He's perfected that way of looking through people, avoiding eye contact at all costs.

Fuck you, he thinks.

As always, however hard Will tries not to, his thoughts turn to Hannibal. Hannibal, whose fate, if Mason gets his way, will probably be a lot worse than Will's own. And Will hates himself a little more for feeling angry that Hannibal won't be given a fighting chance. Unless Alana comes through. It's a toss, really. 50/50.

"I wonder, perhaps, Mr Graham, if we could not try and replicate Meiwes penis recipe? Without overcooking it, obviously."

The shit that comes out of this man's mouth. Cordell is like a filthy animal that dresses up in silks, lipstick on the proverbial pig. But he's really just a beast, rolling in the dirt. Vulgar. Revolting.

"Perhaps we could serve yours to Hannibal as a last meal. He does seem to be so… *enamored with you. Heartwarming really, to see that a man like him could love a man like you."*

Will feels the urge to punch Cordell. To gouge his eyes out. To rip open his ribcage and pull his guts out. It's not so much the words, but the fact the man even thinks what he has to say is worth time and breath. Terrifyingly clear to Will in this moment how Hannibal can torture, kill and eat the rude. Will has the small satisfaction of knowing that the bite he took out of Cordell's cheek will never heal properly. He'll always be disfigured and as ugly on the outside as he in on the inside.

And such a waste of life.

The scalpel goes on, slicing through skin. Cordell takes his sweet time too. He can't have cut more than an inch so far and it feels like he's been at it ages. Tears come more freely now. Because damn it, it hurts. It hurts so bad. The salty liquid mixes up with the blood sliding down the side of his face all the way to his neck where it drips down to the hardwood floor.

Ploc. Ploc.

Will's thoughts center on Hannibal's face in the Uffizi, that look of… *adoration -- for lack of a better word -- Hannibal gave him. That room is now the center of Will's mind palace. Grounding. It has replaced Hannibal's office where they spent countless hours becoming one another. Merging.*

It was surgical. Hannibal very much wanted you to live.

All of Will's nurses confirmed it, in so many words. Jack mentioned it in passing. Chilton seemed obsessed with the fact.

Over Cordell's shoulder, Will can see the Wendigo looking at him. Its feathers are smooth and slick as if covered in oil. Or blood. There's a weird smell in the air, like something has been overcooked. The Wendigo smiles. A wicked smile.

It has Hannibal's teeth.

A feral sound. Cordell is thrown off Will. Neither him nor Will heard Hannibal walk in. Will's eyes can move, a bit. He blinks and stares at Hannibal's feet. They're wet, bare and pale with rivulets of reddish-black on them. He walked barefoot in the snow.

Lion cubs do grow to be formidable beasts.

Will wonders for a second if he might not be dreaming.

But Hannibal is here and a really formidable fighter.

Cordell has the distinct advantage of being much heavier than Hannibal by a solid 40 pounds. Perhaps stronger. Hannibal has the advantage of a hammer and years of lifting dead weight.*Literally.*

Will can't move and it pains him. He can only see whatever parts of the fight are within his eyesight. The contraption around his head restrains his movement. There's a terrible tug in his arm. Blood sprays. Cordell has just yanked the IV out of Will's arm, trying to stop his fall as Hannibal kicks him in the sternum, effectively choking him. Cordell is quick to stand right back up though, grabbing blindly at Will's leg to balance his weight. He's surprisingly quick for such a large man.

There is a flurry of punches and kicks, roars of pain, mostly Cordell's. Hannibal fights almost silently. The hammer is soon discarded -- in favor of fists, much more intimate – sliding on the hardwood floor, stopping its course under the demented dentist chair in which Will is strapped. The metal platter holding Cordell's instruments clatters noisily to the ground when Hannibal kicks out, trying to slip out of the chokehold Cordell has gotten him in. An elbow snaps back, catching Cordell in the eye and again in the jaw. Hannibal slips free.

A muffled grunt from Hannibal when Cordell punches him squarely on the back, one hand protecting his injured eye. Will understands at once, finally recognizing the smell that drifted in the room with the Wendigo. *Burnt flesh. They've branded Hannibal, like an animal.*

Luckily for Will, Hannibal is fighting dirty too and he presses his thumb into Cordell's injured cheek as he pushes his forearm into the other man's windpipe, crushing him against the closest wall. Cordell suddenly pushes forward, twists and rolls, falling to the ground and pinning Hannibal, one arm holding him down, the other reaching blindly for his discarded scalpel. But the ground is slippery because of Will's blood that sprayed unevenly when the needle was yanked out of his arm and Cordell's knees slip, giving Hannibal a slight advantage that lasts less than half a second.

Hannibal is as quick as a snake, though, and slithers out from under Cordell who loses his balance and falls flat on the ground. Hannibal kneels, pressing one knee in the middle of the other man's back, the other on his bicep to hold his outstretched arm on the ground. Cordell groans and fumes. *A glint in Hannibal's eyes.*

Hannibal looks up at Will. Will nods weakly at the hammer, indicating its location under his feet, at least as far as he can tell, strapped as he is. Hannibal smirks and grabs it, not losing his hold on the corpulent man who's twisting as best he can now.

Will remembers this video he once saw of an antelope, struggling in the jaws of a lion. Though Cordell looks nothing like an antelope, Hannibal does have the majestic grace of a lion.

"Do you know there are ten bones comprising the joint of the wrist, attaching the forearm to the metacarpus bones of the hand? There are a further twenty-seven bones in the human hand. Over half our bodies' bones are located in the hands and feet. 106 bones in all. Not the best meat you could serve Mason, really, a bit dry. You do seem equally as incompetent as a doctor and a cook, my dear Cordell. How many times did you fail the interviews before you finally gave up on being a surgeon and opted to be someone's arms and legs?" Hannibal gibes. Cordell grunts in response, spitting blood on the ground. His lip has been split when he fell face first.

"The two major bones of the wrist are the radius and the ulna, they make up the skeletal part of the forearm. The eight others are much smaller. Very fragile. If I were to, let's say, crush them with the hammer, you might never regain full use of your hand. Not that that would be a great loss," Hannibal adds as an afterthought.

Will swallows thickly.

"Now… the question is… above or below the wrist?" Hannibal hums. Cordell twists his head to the side and sees the hammer in Hannibal's hand, ready to strike. He knows how strong Hannibal is, by now, and he knows the blow will leave permanent damage of the especially painful variety.

"Above I think. What do you think Will?" Hannibal doesn't wait for Will's ascent. The hammer strikes. The noise is sickening. It's like a wet squelching where the meat of the arm has absorbed the shock. The ulna and radius snap like twigs. The carpal bones are crushed. Cordell wails like a child, trying desperately to scramble out of Hannibal's hold, to clutch his broken arm to his chest. But Hannibal won't let him. He's now kneeling on both of Cordell's arms, putting his weight on the heavier man's back.

"You do have two hands, however ham-fisted you might be. Should I cut the other one off?" Hannibal taunts. He sees some tools lying by his knee and grabs one, plunging it into Cordell's back, repeatedly. The man's back is soon covered in blood seeping from the shallow wounds.

"You do have considerably more fat than I do. You'd make much better lard for Mason than I, my dear Cordell." Cordell begs and wails. The whole tableau is grotesque and nauseating and Will is going to be sick. It's probably a combination of exhaustion and whatever it is

Cordell put in the IV. Whatever that was, it's clearing out fast. Just not fast enough. Will can already move the tip of his fingers. Not much, but a little. He tries moving his jaw and face. Every move stretches the cuts on his forehead. He winces. His tongue runs out to lick at his too dry lips. Fuck does his face hurt.

Hannibal has found Cordell's scalpel. He looks like an artist wielding it.

"When I'm done with your hands, I'm thinking I'll remove all you have below the knees."

"Screw you!" Cordell blurts out.

Hannibal continues. "Perhaps I'll remove your face too and give it to Mason. Wouldn't be much of an improvement, I'll give you that…" *A dark chuckle. There isn't much left of the careful person suit Hannibal had crafted for the benefit of Baltimore's polite society. He's more beast than human now, savage, unrepenting and deeply amused. He's the Wendigo.He's slick with blood. Cordell tries to push up to destabilize Hannibal but the other man is quicker, grabbing the other man's hair in a fist and smashing his face on the ground. It's like a dull thud as Cordell's orbital bone cracks.*

Will realizes this could last for hours. Hannibal torturing the man to death just because he can. He doesn't seem pressed for time, which means he's probably already disposed of most of the security in the mansion and on the surrounding grounds. Will doesn't have the patience or the desire to wait that long. If he's to die tonight, he doesn't want to sit here while Hannibal has his fun.

"Stop playing with your *fucking food." Will hisses. He feels pinpricks in his fingers and toes. The paralytic has already started clearing from his system now that the IV isn't dripping it slowly in his bloodstream. He's still tied up, though. And he's lost a considerable amount of blood. He's unable to do more than breath, lick his too dry lips and blink.*

And talk, apparently.

Hannibal gazes at him again cocking his head to the side, amused. There's a glint of something predatory, bestial. Lust. For Will's blood, perhaps.

"As you wish." Hannibal bows his head in a mock salute, raising the hammer to strike.

Will looks away. There's no pleasure for him in watching yet another man die, however foul and disgusting the man. It's not that he cannot stomach it. He just won't give Hannibal the satisfaction.

Will stares at Hannibal's bare feet instead. They're bloody, but he can see that most of the blood isn't Hannibal's. Some of it is his, some of it, Cordell's. The rest must have come from the other men Hannibal has bludgeoned on his way here. The hammer suddenly strikes. Cordell goes limp. Hannibal smiles, wiping blood from the corner of his mouth, some of it his from where Cordell got lucky with his meaty fists.

The sickening thud and squish of the hammer fracturing Cordell's skull and digging into his brain matter seem to echo in the room, looping in the silence that ensues, a silence only

broken by Hannibal's labored breathing and Mason's horrible wheezing.

Suddenly, Hannibal stands his full height and towers over Will. He's covered in blood and never has he looked more glorious. Something twists painfully in Will's chest. Seeing Hannibal again and again and again is like a myriad of reckonings. He's always torn between repulsion and the attraction one feels to a kindred spirit. Hannibal wipes his face elegantly on a clean towel he's snatched from the table behind Will's chair. He's smiling benevolently when he returns to Will's side.

God gloats, indeed.

"How are we doing, Will? I'll have to stitch up the side of your face. I don't believe Cordell would have had the courtesy of giving you anesthetic, local or otherwise?"

"Paralytic. It's clearing out a bit. I don't think Cordell was very good with the dosage." Will clears his throat, swallowing thickly. He's so damn *thirsty.*

"I can see that." Hannibal says, contemplative.

"Is he…" Will coughs. It's like he hasn't spoken in years. "Is he dead?"

He asks, but he already knows.

"Yes. He was quite a waste of life if you ask me. His oysters were over-spiced." Will can't help but chuckle. It's a mirthless laugh, bitter. Hannibal smiles fondly, like Will is a young child that has just finished a difficult puzzle without any help from him.

For all Will knows now, Hannibal will stitch him up only so he can better savor him later. And frankly, it still feels like a better ending than having his face cut off and given to a sadistic pedophile.

There is a wet cloth suddenly, gently blotting tear tracks and blood off his cheeks.

"How much can you move?" Hannibal asks, looking over Will's body with the scrutiny of a good surgeon. His gaze brushes over the scar. Will wiggles his right hand a bit, grabbing weakly at Hannibal's borrowed shirt, knowing very well that the movement is rather unconvincing. Hannibal's hand wraps around his own, in a facsimile of a lover's caress, his fingers entwined with Will's. It always comes to a shock to Will how unafraid he has become of Hannibal. Even with a knife in his gut, it's never fear he's felt for the man. Pity, perhaps. Anger, certainly. Mostly, understanding. What good is extreme empathy if it can't make you understand what moves the most unmovable of creatures?

"I'm rather sorry you got caught up in Mason's madness, my dear Will. I wouldn't think of sharing you with anyone." Hannibal says, a smile grazing his blood-caked face. He's wiped most of it off, but some of it had time to dry and will require a more thorough wash. It looks like the sienna colouring of the buildings in Florence against the golden glow of Hannibal's skin. Baroque in its own way.

“Now if you’ll let me clean up a bit, I’ll tend to your wounds and then we’ll give dear Mason the face he so deserves.”

Will’s stomach churns at the thought. He’s still strapped to the chair.

“How did you get free?”

“Alana and Margot. Beautiful creatures, the both of them. I’ll go fetch them when I’m ready.”

He can feel Hannibal busying himself around the room, cleaning supplies and slipping on some surgeon gloves that soon come to gently caress Will’s hair out of the way of the twin wounds on his forehead.

“Fetch them for what?” Will mumbles.

“These might leave scars, but I’ll do my best to sew you back up as cleanly as possible.” Hannibal murmurs, his face inches from Will’s as he peels back the bandage from the wound he himself inflicted to Will with the bone saw. He completely ignores Will’s question, focused on his task.

Things do not bode well for Mason Verger if Margot has anything to say about it. It seems that even in this wild state, Hannibal still likes to toy with people. He’s probably finally convinced Margot to murder her brother, Will reasons. He can’t even bring himself to care. Mason’s had it coming.

Will’s mouth is cottony as he tries to form words.

“I thought…” The straps are finally undone around his head, allowing Will to roll his neck from side to side, sighing in content. The ache on his forehead has receded into a dull burn. Hannibal’s gloved hands gently turn his face back under the light so he can better assess the damage to Will’s skin.

“Yes? You thought I’d finish Cordell’s job myself?” Hannibal suggests, mildly amused. “I do not share Mason and Cordell’s taste for the vulgar. And when or if you do eat me, I’ll make sure your face is attached to your body. *And willing.”*

Will would chuckle if he could, but smiling requires too much muscle control. It’s hard to tell how much of what Hannibal is saying is the product of almost two years of sexual and violent innuendo between them, thinly veiled or not, or if he’s simply making a joke to distract Will from the pain when Hannibal applies iodine to his wounds. Will hisses softly.

“Shhh…shh, almost over.” There’s a gentle blow of air on the wound. Will’s mind is assaulted with images of their last dinner in Florence... Of Hannibal blowing on his stupid bouillon – lest Will burn his tongue – before using a bone saw to carve in his skull. Paradoxical doesn’t even cover it.

“I’ll give you a few shots of local anesthetic to numb out the pain.”

“Why do you care?” Will mutters. His tongue feels heavy in his mouth and his mouth is dry. He’d give anything for a sip of water. He licks at his lips once more. As if anticipating his

need, Hannibal brings a cup up to his mouth, brimming with ice-cold water.

“Drink slowly. Your muscle control should be fully back in about two to three hours. Until then, central systems will return first, then muscle control in your extremities. Drink slowly.” He repeats, pulling the cup away. “I wouldn’t want you to choke.” There’s a hand cradling Will’s head softly, fingers carding through his hair. And the touch is wonderful. No monster should have that gentle a touch when caressing his would-be victim. Will moans softly, hating himself just a little bit more for being that craved for a human touch that isn’t raw violence and pain. The water is blissful in Will’s mouth, sliding without much effort down his throat. The cup is removed shortly and Will’s tongue chases it out.

“Greedy.” Hannibal whispers. He sounds pleased. His gaze holds Will’s and Will can feel a blush spreading on his cheeks. Being seen is intoxicating. It’s not hard to see that the lines have blurred not only between where Will and Hannibal end, but where love and hatred meet. The tension is palpable between them. Suddenly, there’s a hand on Will’s thigh, fingers skimming the inseam of the luxurious if gaudy trousers the Verger estate has provided him with. Hannibal’s hand is warm, almost burning through the fabric. Will almost squirms. He wants to throw up. Wants to claw Hannibal’s face off with his bare hands. Wants that hand to crawl that much higher up his thigh to where he needs it right now. Wants those bloody lips to part his own and suck on his tongue. Needs it as much as a sip of that ice-cold water.

“Is this how it’s supposed to go?” Will breathes.

“The lines do blur so very much when it comes to you, Will. More often than not, I am torn between devouring you and eating you until you beg me to do it just a little bit more.” Hannibal’s voice drips with sex. Strange that this never really came up in so many words between them. It was always there of course, just under the waterline, simmering. *Lust. Will can see now how easy it must have been for Alana and Bedelia to fall for a man like Hannibal, his singular attention concentrated on a person - like the sun through a magnifying glass – until they feel they could disappear if not for Hannibal’s gaze. It’s intoxicating. Poisonous, really.*

“When did… when did your… proclivities change towards me?” Will asks. Silly, really. Their penchants have always revolved around blood, violence and an incommensurable hunger, carnal and not. A hunger like a raging forest fire, engulfing everything.

“My proclivities have always been one and the same towards you.” Will feels his stomach fall as the hand crawls further up his thigh, soothingly – yet anything but, all at once – kneading his tensed muscles. Will can feel blood pooling in his groin, his trousers becoming tighter by the second. He’s torn between self-disgust and an overwhelming need to grab Hannibal by the hair and bite his way into his mouth. How bad could it possibly be to die by the hand of a fallen angel? Of God himself?

How is a mere mortal meant to resist a God?

“You mean you’ve always wanted to fuck me?” Will finally gasps as Hannibal’s hand, busy on his thigh, suddenly moves to his neck, his thumb caressing Will’s jugular in a hypnotic dance, as if typing Morse code on his pulse.

“I must admit, fucking Alana felt a bit at times like fucking you.” The crude words feel foreign coming from such a distinguished mouth, as if Hannibal is not quite used to using them, so submerged that he has always been in his person suit. It’s exhilarating, really, to see him shed the pretense and bask in murderous glory.

“She was a poor substitute for you, but enjoyable enough.” Hannibal reasons as his hand leaves Will’s body to get a syringe. Will is thankful for the respite. When it comes, the prickle of the needle on his face feels almost blissful after the raw pain of open cuts.

“You never really asked.” Will mutters, sarcastically. He’s slightly horrified to find that he’d probably have said yes, before the blood bath in Baltimore. Even begged for more.

“Are you saying you’d have partaken in some more… carnal activities had I suggested it?” Hannibal muses.

“Isn’t all we do together a bit carnal in itself? Can’t think of anything more carnal than ripping someone apart with a friend.” Will’s speech is still unsure, but his jaw feels stronger by the second.

“There is a certain carnality in eating the rude, indeed.” Hannibal smiles, his teeth pointy and dangerous. Breathing in, he closes his eyes in something that looks very much like delight. “You’re not wearing that horrible aftershave anymore.”

“Didn’t get a bottle this Christmas.” Will chuckles. Hannibal’s hands are the very definition of efficiency on his wounds.

“Will you try to kill me again?” Hannibal suddenly asks. It’s not concern for one’s survival, really. More like a bizarrely displaced professional curiosity.

“Never wanted to kill you. Not entirely. Part of me will always want to scar you, tear you apart. But that’s the part of me I must cut out.” Will replies, astonished by the truth in his words. “You’re bad for me.” That’s the understatement of the year. This week alone, Will has been shot and carved at all because of the man now wielding the needle and thread meant to hold him together at the seams.

“And you for me. And yet…” There is the snip of a pair of scissors cutting thread and the hands move from Will’s temple to his forehead.

“And yet…”

“And yet I want you by my side.”

“Bedelia wasn’t cutting it? Shame.” The words are dripping with acid. Hannibal doesn’t even flinch.

“Bedelia is too smart for her own good.” Hannibal chides, as if the reproach really is meant for Will.

“Bedelia was high as a kite last time I saw her, and still she was the one in control of the room. I’d say Dr. Du Maurier is one hell of a survivor. She did survive your *honeymoon…”*

Will pauses, his gaze searching Hannibal's, but he's evading Will, keeping his gaze steady on the delicate work he is doing on Will's forehead. "How many people has Lydia Fell killed for you?"

"How many have you killed for me?" Hannibal replies.

"I don't kill for you, Dr Lecter." Will hisses as the needle in his flesh digs in harder than necessary.

"I often wonder what it is about you that fascinates me so."

"Pot, kettle. I told you the first time we met. I don't find you that interesting."

"And yet." Hannibal mutters, echoing his words from before.

"I don't find you all that interesting in the same regards I don't find myself interesting. We're two sides of a coin. A very messed up coin, I'll give you that. But it would be immensely pretentious of me to be fascinated with either side. I reckon you don't have that problem."

"You are fascinating, in many regards Will. Whether you like it or not. You are most unique."

"That why you tried to eat my brain? Some sort of exotic dish?" Will chuckles, eliciting a calming hand to his chin to keep him from moving. Hannibal's thumb slides over Will's bottom lip, enjoying the heat of the wet pulp and the drier grain of Will's parched lips. Will stops breathing for a second. Hannibal has removed his glove at some point and it's the bare pulp of his thumb that's now grazing Will's skin. A shiver of desire runs down Will's spine. He doesn't even try to rationalize it at this point.

"I want to eat all of you. Consume you so we can never be parted. I just can't abide the idea of having to kill you to do it."

"You cut into my skull with a bone saw." Will snaps, jerking his lips away from the treacherous fingers.

"Reckless. It did give Jack quite a fright." Hannibal has the gal to smirk. As if they're retelling a night on the town story and not Will's almost murder.

"Had we not been rudely interrupted by the *polizia, would you have gone through with it? Eaten my brain and fed some to Jack?" Will asks. Hannibal just sits there, staring at him, deep in thought.*

"I guess we shall never know." Hannibal finally admits.

"Reckon I'd taste as good as *Mischa?" the words are out of Will's mouth before he can stop them. The air crackles between them, and time seems to stop. The teacup just floats midair, neither safe nor broken. Will feels equally as frozen in time.*

He doesn't expect Hannibal's next move, but it's simultaneously as if every cell in his body has predicted it, known it was coming, anticipated it, wanted it. The kiss is searing, almost like the brand on Hannibal's back. One swipe of tongue into Will's mouth and Will turns into

putty in Hannibal's hands, his jaw working frantically to devour Hannibal's lips. He moans feebly into Hannibal's hungry mouth. They both taste like iron, both their mouths covered in blood from their rather busy and violent evening. Their tongues duel and it feels like they've been rehearsing this kind of dance for as long as they've known each other. There is too much teeth, too much fervor in the way their mouths clash. It feels more like dominance than love, but then again, Hannibal doesn't know how to love.

"Fuck" Will gasps when Hannibal finally lets go of his mouth to breathe. But his mouth heads instead for Will's forehead to tongue at the wound he inflicted there, in an act of pure savagery. Hannibal's hands are everywhere at once, caressing his torso, yanking mercilessly at the hair at the nape of his neck that is matted with blood. A hand brushes roughly on the bullet hole in Will's shoulder and he whines in pain. And for some twisted, fucked up reason Will has long given up trying to understand, the pain only feeds the fire in his belly.

"You do taste delicious." Hannibal finally grunts, pulling back from Will as if he's been burned. As if Will is Hannibal's version of the sun, and being too near hurts immensely. *Heat. The smell of burnt flesh.*

"They branded you." Will murmurs, lifting his left hand to grab at Hannibal's wrist.

"They wanted me to have the full experience of the pig." Hannibal explains before returning to his task, applying more iodine to the wound he just licked like the glaze off a cake.

"Wouldn't want you to get an infection." Hannibal reasons.

At this, Will actually laughs, his face responding to his body's command to stretch into a grin. It would be absurdly ironic for Will to die of an infection after all he's survived to get to this point where they're both hanging, unsure and unstable, on the edge of the knife.

Neither of the men talk about the kiss they just shared. Or the fact that Will is visibly aroused by the entire situation. If one can judge by the slight flush on Hannibal's exposed chest and face, Will would wager the man is equally as turned on. Having toed on the brink of death so frequently in the last days apparently makes them both yearn for something, anything to feel alive. Hannibal smiles and finishes doing the stitches on Will's forehead.

"If we're ever truly parted, you'll always keep a souvenir of me." Will frowns. It's much easier than laughing, even with the skin of his forehead stretched taunt by the stitches.

"You already left me a smile to remember you by." Will's gaze looks down at his exposed chest and at the thin pinkish-white scar there. Hannibal looks at it as if for the first time, even though he's taken more than a few glances at it since he's walked into the room. It's his handiwork and he seems proud of it. Will swallows down his rage.

"May I?"

A soft nod and Hannibal's fingers are ghosting over the wound he inflicted to Will.

"They said it was surgical. That you wanted me to live. That, or you've become sentimental and clumsy." Will breathes, his nipples tingling as Hannibal's fingers brush nearby. For a

moment, the only noise in the room is the sound of the machines keeping Mason Verger under. He's stopped doing that horrible rasping noise. Will closes his eyes.

He can barely bring himself to look when Hannibal's mouth descends on the wound on his stomach. It feels so terribly good, like an apology, as Hannibal tongues the scar, its puckered texture still sensitive to the touch. Will gasps and moans inelegantly. From half-hard he's gone into full-blown arousal in two heartbeats.

"Did you really bathe and dress me in Florence? Or did I dream it?"

"Is that the kind of dreams you have of me, Will?" Hannibal says, laying his cheek to Will's stomach to look at him. The man has the gal to tease.

"You kissed me then too."

"You are very kissable."

"I don't think Alana would agree. She ran out on me the last time I kissed her." Will chuckles darkly. Alana has always been a weapon between them too, wielded by each, in turn, to cut away at the other. Will doesn't feel like now should be any different.

"Oh, I'd reckon Alana agrees fully. She has exquisite taste. One of the many reasons I do not feel inclined to keep good on my promise to kill her."

"How much time do we have now?"

"Not nearly enough for what I have in mind. But we'll manage. And then I'll take you home."

"I can't walk."

"I'll carry you. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got an operation to perform, a rather delicate one that requires a great deal of *doigté." Hannibal says, pressing one last wet kiss, full of tongue and teeth on Will's stomach.*

"Can you untie me?" Will asks. He wishes it didn't sound so much like begging.

Hannibal's hands deftly undo the leather straps keeping Will immobile and Will can finally move his neck enough to take a good look at the bloody pulp that is now Cordell.

"You intend to take care of this?" Hannibal asks, predatory eyes going from Will's eyes to his lips to the obvious bulge in his pants. Will feels a bit breathless.

"Want to do it for me? I'm a bit…under the weather at the moment. Bullet wound and all…" Will dares, his gaze searching Hannibal's. Pushing back at Hannibal feels a bit like stepping as close as possible to the edge of a very tall building without falling. But there's always a chance it might happen and it makes the entire experience so… *thrilling.*

Hannibal seems to hesitate for a second. What's a little hand-job between murderers, really?

“No time. I’m afraid I’ll have to take care of you later.” Will sighs softly, placating Hannibal with mock disappointment. Even has the gal to pout, jutting his bottom lip out. There is so much humor in all of this, it almost feels like a parody of what Will’s life used to be.

He turns his head away, closing his eyes to rest. Hannibal leaves the room momentarily but returns not a minute later with Margot and Alana in tow. When they walk in the room, the air becomes static. Both women are carrying canes, it seems, long dark sticks hanging from their hand. They look very much one and the same. Like they’ve merged. Will blames it on the exhaustion.

“You better have kept your promise…” Alana hisses at Hannibal. Will thinks that perhaps that isn’t smart of her, to antagonize Hannibal now. When she sees the mess he’s made of Cordell, though, she has the good sense to shut up. Her gaze travels from Cordell’s body to Will and her eyes widen fractionally. Margot, tear tracks made of the inky black of her mascara stands one step behind Alana, looking from Cordell to Mason to Will. Will focuses on Margot. She’s changed, somehow.

“Good God” Margot gasps before covering her mouth elegantly with her hand. Will catches her eyes. They widen fractionally. Will blinks.

“God isn’t here. No need to implore him, Margot.” Hannibal says, flipping Cordell over so as to expose his face.

“How… how are we to proceed?” Alana asks. She’s starring at Mason. Will finally realizes that Margot isn’t holding a cane or a walking stick at all. It’s a cattle prod.

He can’t help the giggle that bubbles out of his mouth. Both women stare at him as if he’s just blasphemed in Church. Crime scenes are not places where one should giggle.

“You intend to milk him, so to speak?” Will asks. Hannibal is busy undoing Mason’s ridiculous red pajamas.

“Heads or tails, dear Margot?” Hannibal asks. Margot seems confused at first but then she understands.

“I don’t want to see his face. I’ve seen it quite enough already.” Margot says, wiping at her cheeks with the back of her hand.

“I’ll require a little help, of course, ladies. I can find his prostate all right, but I can’t stimulate it and hold the vial at the same time.” Hannibal’s voice is clinical, detached. Will watches in fascination.

“I’d love to help of course, but I’ll have to pass given I’m still quite paralyzed.” Will sneers. Alana’s gaze falls back on him and he sees a hint of concern behind the steel of her blue icy eyes.

She finally seems to snap out of it, joining Hannibal and helping him flip the dead weight of Mason from his mechanical chair over the surface of the nearest table. Mason’s legs dangle lifelessly. Alana holds his upper body in place while Hannibal fumbles with the pants of the

pajamas, sliding them down the man's thighs roughly. Margot watches, dispassionately. Hannibal asks her over to help Alana hold the bulk of Mason's useless weight whilst he slips on surgical gloves and, without further ado, shoves his fingers in Mason Verger. There's a slight twitch in Hannibal's cheek. *Distaste. The whole scene feels surreal.*

"Vial." Hannibal asks, jutting his chin out to indicate to Margot where to find the object in question. Margot snatches it and roughly places it against Mason's hardening cock.

"You're sure this is gonna work?" she asks Hannibal. Hannibal cocks an eyebrow at her and a small smile tugs at his lip.

"Of course. I know what I'm doing." Alana clenches her jaw. Keeping her hand on Mason's back, she switches her cane for the cattle prod, handing it to Hannibal who quickly gets the work done, filling the vial to the brim. Will winces when the cattle prod goes off, not that they can see it go off, any of them. But there is a burnt smell in the air, like ozone right before a storm.

"Now, I'd advise the two of you to get out of here. I'll take care of the rest." Hannibal says, snapping off the gloves before cleaning his hands thoroughly at the sink. Without his considerable strength, Margot and Alana struggle to keep Mason's torso on the table and he finally slumps down to the ground, still unconscious.

"Oops." Margot's expression is anything but sorry. Hannibal simply gives her a disapproving stare before lifting Mason back into his chair, making sure to tuck everything back into his pants. If Alana or Margot are impressed by the sheer strength of Hannibal, they don't let anything show.

"What will you do with him?" Alana asks. Will doesn't know whether she's talking about him or Mason or Cordell. "Mason, I mean." She clarifies.

"Oh, I'll simply give him the new face he so longs for." Hannibal responds, deliberately obtuse. Alana flushes red in anger.

"You promised." She breathes. Hannibal steps into her personal space, sliding a hand around the hip she seems to favor in a move that is as much seduction as it is predation. She doesn't tremble but Will can see her fingers blanch around the pommel of her cane which she's retrieved by the table.

"Do not touch me." She hisses.

"Dear Alana, I always keep my promises. I do not intend to give Mason our dear Will's face." Hannibal's fingers slide from Alana's hip to her hair, tucking it behind her ear.

"Now off you go, tut, tut." He glances at Margot. "Keep those at body temperature until you use them" he cocks an eyebrow at Alana who almost snarls. "or freeze them."

"What about Will?" It's the first time Margot has really acknowledged his presence in the room.

“I’ll be fine. Dr Lecter is, after all, a doctor.” Will sighs. He’s thankful that Margot might end up getting what she longs for. She’s the only true victim in this entire wicked story.

“I’ll take good care of Will.” Hannibal says before gently pushing them both out of the room.

“Will you excuse me, Will, while I tend to our patient here. I’ll be back with you in a tick”.

Will closes his eyes once more while Hannibal does what he’s best at. The noises are disturbing. Will has gutted fish before and he’s even removed the fur from rabbits and squirrels his dogs have killed and brought home to him. The noise of Cordell’s skin being teased off his bones and ligaments, however, is beyond anything Will could have imagined.

Hannibal is silent throughout the procedure. *Professional. Surgical. When he rises finally, armed with the bloodied face scalp, Will gazes at him, equal parts horror and admiration on his face.*

“Cordell was a very dedicated employee if a lousy one. Seems fair that his professional sacrifice not to go to waste.” Hannibal smirks, placing the bloodied scalp on Mason Verger’s sleeping face before tying the contraptions made to keep it in place.

“What now?” Will asks. His vision is blurred, slightly. He’s so tired, he feels like someone could scoop him off the demented dentist chair with a spoon. *Boneless. He has yet to regain control of his legs. His arms feel heavy and useless as he crosses them over his chest. His shoulder is painful, throbbing uncomfortably every time he moves.*

“How are you feeling?” Hannibal asks.

“Cold.” Will’s nipples are tight little buds on his chest and his skin is covered in goosebumps.

“It’s blood loss. Ideally, I’d recommend a transfusion but seeing as we do not have time nor the resources, I’ll just give you a mild sedative to relax you and help you sleep and we’ll rehydrate you when we’re away from this place.” Hannibal reasons.

“You like me unconscious and delirious don’t you?” Will mutters. He is cut-off by Hannibal sliding a hand behind his neck to lift him off his seat. Hannibal’s fingers are both rough and tender against his scalp, teasing at Will’s hair, eliciting soft moans from his lips.

“I like you any way I can get you.” Hannibal replies before pressing his lips once more to Will’s. Desire and anger bubble up in Will’s stomach. He bites Hannibal’s lip, hard enough to draw blood.

“Pity then that you can’t have me.” Will retorts, his breath warm on Hannibal’s bloodied lip.

A long moment passes between them. The tension is still palpable, like fog in the air. And then, a slight prick to Will’s arm and he blissfully falls into a dreamless sleep.

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Will starts regaining consciousness *seconds, hours, minutes, days later. He couldn’t tell for the life of him. There is cold wind against his neck, which is exposed. There is the icy lick of*

snowflakes melting on his skin. He's floating above the ground. Perhaps he's dead? A soft grunt from the figure carrying him and he knows that he's neither dreaming nor dead.

"You're much heavier than you look…" Hannibal mutters. And Will would laugh, but he's just so exhausted. He drifts right back into unconsciousness.

When he awakes again, he is in a car. He can tell by the soft lull of the motor. A fancy car. An expensive one. It smells like new leather. Hannibal's car. How on earth Hannibal found a Bentley to drive between escaping Muskrat Farm and now, Will cannot tell. But then again, Hannibal is extremely resourceful. They are not alone in the car. Will tries to open his eyes but they feel so heavy. So he just keeps them closed and lets the motor lull him slowly.

"You care about him." The clipped accented tone. *Chiyoh. That would explain the car and the swift means of escape. Will thinks she's extremely loyal for someone Hannibal kept caged in Lithuania for years.*

"Yes."

"Why?" She's sitting next to Hannibal, driving. Will is curled up on the back seat, covered with a thick blanket. *A wool coat his mind supplies. Hannibal's.*

"For the same reasons you care for me." Hannibal replies. He hisses softly when the car hits a bump on the road. The burn on his back is chafing against the fabric of his clothes.

"Are you in love with him?" Chiyoh asks, her tone innocent, her words anything but.

"Are you in love with me?" Hannibal chuckles. Chiyoh sighs.

"You are like a brother to me." Chiyoh replies no less intent on getting an answer out of Hannibal. But she's willing to play along for now. She cajoles him, has always known that that is the only way to get what she wants out of him.

"I'd advise you against any sisterly feelings towards me. It doesn't end well for the people that get too close." Hannibal replies somberly.

"I'm all too aware of that. But is he, really?"

"Will Graham is the better half of me. He knows how close to the flame he can get without getting burnt. Alas, I always want to burn him and he always strays just within reach." Chiyoh does not respond to that statement. Its truth just hangs there, in the air. Will can feel the lights of the highway flashing through the window on his lids. They're going fairly fast.

"I pushed him off a train." Chiyoh says breaking the silence that has slowly seeped into the car like a drowsy fog.

"He told me. I was proud of you for it. For getting rid of the chains I'd left you in." There are layers and layers of subtext that Will doesn't even begin to grasp. It's as if Hannibal has known all along that Will and Chiyoh were going to cross paths. As if that was his design all along.

"*He was hardly chains. He was easy to seduce, I didn't even have to fight him."*

"You like him." Hannibal simply states, a smile evident in his voice.

"He is a better version of you. No less overwhelming, but certainly less toxic." Chiyoh replies. Hannibal hums in agreement.

The lulling of the car finally drags Will back to sleep, even though he fights against it. He'd like to hear more. More about Hannibal, the Hannibal Chiyoh grew up with.

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Will wakes up again when the car stops. Out the window, he can make out his home in Wolf Trap, lit up slowly by a figure walking inside. Chiyoh. The elegant curve of her neck. Will can make it out through the frosted pane of his windows. She's lighting candles. There is cool wind against his face and that's when Will realizes Hannibal has slipped in the backseat with him. The door of the car is ajar, and Hannibal is cradling Will's head on his lap, brushing back sweaty curls from his forehead.

"How much of our conversation did you hear?" Hannibal asks.

"You think you're in love with me." Will chuckles, a bitter chuckle devoid of mirth.

"Chiyoh thinks I'm in love with you. Bedelia was bitterly jealous of you. Both remarkable creatures. I prefer the company of the extraordinary to the mundane." Hannibal's able fingers tangle some more in Will's hair. Shivers run down Will's spine. He feels like a dog, being petted by its master and rejoicing in this feeling that he belongs to someone, to something. Even if in Will's case, he belongs to Satan himself. He pushes his head further in the caress. Hannibal hums softly in agreement.

"Is that why you don't eat them?" Will asks, pressing his cheek into the rough wool of Hannibal's pants. Even when he steals clothes, Hannibal always dresses impeccably, it seems. The pants smell of Hannibal, a dark fragrant musk. For all he knows, Hannibal changed in his own clothes when Chiyoh procured the car for them. It doesn't matter. The smell is divine, soothing for the memories it contains and exciting at the same time.

"It's apparently why I cannot bring myself to eat you."

Will rolls his head on Hannibal's lap and gazes up at him. The lights from the car's headlights reflecting on the snow make Hannibal's eyes look feral and wild.

"You got close enough. That parsley infusion was dreadful, by the way."

"I apologize about that. Sogliato's kitchen was severely lacking and I did not have nearly enough time to procure the right ingredients." Hannibal mutters, a slight smile tugging at his lips.

"Took too much time bathing and drugging me."

“And stitching you up. Chiyoh got you good. She’s always been a very good shot. She didn’t hit anything vital, of course. Just hit enough to incapacitate you.”

“She’s… very protective of you.”

“So am I of her.”

“That why you left her to guard a child molester and rapist?” Will clears his throat, the words coming out gravelly.

“She chose her own fate. I wanted to kill that man. Slowly. Torture him the way he’d… But she wouldn’t let me. She said he deserved worst. He deserved to live, to be shunned, to never see the light of day again.”

“I made him into a firefly.” Will whispers. “Elevated him from the darkness where you’d left him.”

“She told me.”

“How old were you?” Will asks, suddenly, wetting his too-dry lips.

“Fifteen. Mischa had just turned seven. Chiyoh had just arrived from Japan, sent over by her mother to become my aunt’s handmaiden. She was about six. But she remembers. She alerted me to the screams.”

“Did you ever feel guilty for not saving her in time? Or are you beyond the simplicity of guilt?”

The breeze that drifts in from the open door smells earthy and wet. *Homey. Strange that Will feels safest with his head cradled on the knees of a monster.*

“As one should. It was my duty to honor and protect my family. And I failed.”

“So you honored her remains and ate her.” Will concludes, blinking slowly to bring Hannibal’s face back into focus.

“She was my first. I have never wanted to eat another again for the same reasons.”

“Until me.” In any other situation, the words would seem pompous. But they ring with a truth Hannibal simply cannot deny. Will is as much a part of him as Mischa. His feelings for Will are equally as strong as those he harbored for his young sister.

Different, but equally as strong.

“I have yet to taste you properly.” Hannibal replies. Will hears the sexual innuendo but he won’t be distracted this close to the goal. The drugs in his system are causing a chaotic mayhem. He feels hyperaware and drowsy all at once.

“I don’t know how much it says about me that I attract you. I must be terribly broken.” Will sighs when Hannibal’s fingers rake against his scalp, massaging roughly. A spark – for it is

that sudden - of arousal slides down Will's spine, gathering thickly at the pit of his belly like warm honey at the bottom of a teacup. He doesn't know how much it speaks of his character that he'd probably let Hannibal do anything he wants to him. That he'd probably beg for more if Hannibal would ask him to. Any depravity he'd go for because how can you deny half of yourself?

"You were right, you know. You have changed me, just as much as I've changed you." Hannibal admits. "I thought myself unchangeable, like a rock. And yet you've made me other, just as I've made you other."

"More so. I've changed you in ways more dramatic than you'll ever admit, Hannibal. You'd stop killing, if I asked you to, wouldn't you? You'd turn yourself in. You'd do it all just so I'd keep seeing you, looking at you, *being you. Because it's addicting to be seen and known for what we are. I know, I almost let you kill me just so you'd see me some more." Will ushers the words at the same time as he understands their truth. Hannibal would stop running if he asked him to. Hannibal is still here, cradling his head, when he could be miles away, planning his next escape. But he's here, caressing Will's hair like he hasn't tried, not two days ago, to peel it back from his skull to eat his brain.*

Hannibal doesn't reply. Instead, he leans down and kisses Will's forehead gently, like a blessing. Or a curse.

"Come on, now. Let's get you in clean clothes and in bed. You've had a tough couple of days." Hannibal says soothingly before sliding out of the car to drag Will inelegantly out of it in his wake. Will's legs feel like rubber and he relies heavily on Hannibal to help him to the house. Hannibal's wounds are taking their toll and Will really is quite heavy.

Will would laugh if he didn't feel so damn tired and groggy. Symbolic really that Hannibal would practically carry him over the threshold of his own damn house. He leans his head heavily against Hannibal's arm. Hannibal smells like blood and smoke and burnt skin and cool wet snow and that intoxicating cologne of his. Barely, but it's still there, clinging to his skin.

"I like your cologne. You should buy me some for Christmas." Will drawls, rolling his face on Hannibal's sleeve as he's deposited on the closed lid of his toilet, still fully dressed. Chiyoh has lit some candles Will didn't even know he owned. The place is glowing with them. She standing there in the hallway, staring at Will over Hannibal's shoulder.

"A blackout." Chiyoh answers Will's unasked question.

"I've got flashlights somewhere… drawer in the main room. Happens all the time out here…" Will mutters. "It's the price of solitude."

Chiyoh pushes off the wall, her booted feet disappearing from Will's sight.

"I'll have to bathe you again, I'm afraid." Hannibal says, very seriously.

"Wasn't so bad the first time. For what I remember of it." Will almost giggles. "You're a surprisingly gentle caretaker for a serial killer."

“Doctor.” *First, do no harm. Even Hannibal can see the humor in this. He’s kneeling by Will’s feet, helping him out of his boots.*

“I should feel embarrassed about being so useless right now. Paralysis will do that to a man. Giving me a bath isn’t what you signed up for when you became my shrink is it?”

Hannibal doesn’t answer, just starts undoing the coat he’s wrapped around Will, peeling away the layers softly until Will is just wearing the trousers Cordell dressed him with.

“But then again,” Will says, breaking the silence once more, “it’s your own damn fault for putting me in situations where your only option is to get me naked.” The drugs Hannibal has given him must be much stronger than he’d thought because Will feels brazen and childish and daring. He’s suddenly very dizzy and he bends forward, holding himself up by putting his hands on Hannibal’s shoulder. He feels a bit giddy as he runs the tips of his fingers beneath the collar of Hannibal’s shirt, grazing hot chafed skin. They put him in a collar, like a dog, Will realizes. Will wishes Hannibal would curl up at his feet like Winston, nuzzle his hand for affection. Will wants to pet Hannibal.

“How else could I properly draw you if I haven’t seen all of you?”

“Oh I believe you’ve seen enough of me to draw…” Will chuckles, his forehead pressed against Hannibal. He feels cold without his shirt on. No electricity means no heating. He hears noises from the main room and realizes that Chiyoh is building a fire in the hearth.

Smart, practical Chiyoh.

Hannibal wets a cloth and starts wiping at Will’s face, gently.

“We’ll need to wash your hair and bathe you properly. You’re covered in blood.”

“’m afraid I won’t be much help in the bathing. Can barely move my arms.” Will demonstrates by grabbing at Hannibal’s wrist and squeezing softly. Hannibal tenses beneath him, as if burned by the touch.

“You dislike it when I touch you.” Will muses. His eyes are getting slowly habituated to the semi-dark of his bathroom. Candles are flickering over the sink, bathing the entire room in a warm if weak golden glow. Will curls his bare toes in the plush bath mat.

“I do not dislike it. Simply fear you might forget to forgive and touch to burn.”

Hannibal eyes Will’s trousers critically.

“Let’s get you out of those.” He helps Will up, but Will’s knees buckle. Hannibal is quick to react and pushes Will up against the bathroom counter to hold him up. They’re pressed from knee to shoulders together. Will pants softly against Hannibal’s neck, gazing up at him through heavy-lidded eyes.

Hannibal gazes at Will’s long lashes. Obscene on a face like his. Thick, long, curled just the right way to make him look both coy and shy at the same time.

There's a hand at Will's hip, suddenly, tracing the belt until the fingers meet the buckle. *Deft, practiced fingers. There is the metallic sound of a buckle being undone and a zipper sliding down. Will's gaze is challenging as he smirks softly at Hannibal. Hannibal's gaze is inscrutable. Suddenly, there's a hand in Will's trousers, caressing taunt skin through the thin fabric of his underwear. The touch is almost clinical, exploring slowly. The only thing that gives Hannibal away is the slight hitch in his breathing. Will is hard as a rock. He's quite amazed by the fact himself. Must be some fantastic shit that Hannibal injected him with.*

Will hisses and closes his eyes. Hannibal's hand is burning. Not enough and too much at the same time.

"Going to give me a hand, are you?" Will finally asks, opening his eyes to stare at Hannibal. Apparently the drugs also make him sputter stupidities.

"Is that what you want?" Hannibal's voice is rough.

"We do badly need a shower." Will reasons. Suddenly, Will's trousers are down to his knees and he's left in only his underwear, his erection straining against the fabric, Hannibal kneeling in front of him, a steadying hand at his hip.

As Hannibal tugs the trousers off Will's legs, Will realizes it puts Hannibal's mouth at the perfect height to… Will rolls his head from side to side, like a cat. He almost wants to purr when he feels Hannibal's hot breath on his hip.

"We should take those off too." Hannibal says, gazing up at Will, an amused glint in his eyes. Hannibal's tongue darts out to wet his lips. Will isn't sure if he imagines it.

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours." Will mumbles. But then he's naked and his leg muscles are straining to keep him upright and thank god for Hannibal's steady hold. Hannibal presses a kiss to his hipbone and Will's hips twitch of their own accord.

"There would be a certain grace and irony to it" Hannibal muses, gazing at Will's cock like it's the most normal thing in the world. Will's cock jolts in response, a drop of precum smearing against his stomach. The brain is the most sexual of organs and Will, by walking through the heads of the most depraved individuals, has amassed a wide array of sick, twisted fantasies. They all seem to be colliding now, bouncing around in his skull like so many pinballs. All of them involve Hannibal's mouth and hands and cock and teeth on him. Some involve a staggeringly surprising amount of teeth.

"Take off your clothes." Will suddenly orders, holding himself with a bit more strength against the counter with his left hand. His right goes to Hannibal's head, ruffling his hair, sliding down to Hannibal's shirt when the man finally stands. Undoing Hannibal's shirt seems like the most natural thing in the world, right now. Hannibal isn't much help at first, content to simply cage Will between his arms, pressing his hips closer.

"I wish I'd left a scar on you of my own. You certainly left me quite a collection, by your hands and by others'." Will ponders, the thought slipping in and out of focus like the fume of a neon cigarette. He finally exposes Hannibal's chest. There are old scars there, some fresher ones too. Will traces the shape of his own scar on Hannibal's skin, delighting in the sharp

intake of breath it elicits out of the man. He feels high and light and yet in control and heavy all at the same time. He should ask Hannibal for more of whatever it is he gave him. It's *fantastic.*

"Do you?" Hannibal says, pulling back slowly. Will gazes at him, his face coming in and out of focus, overlapped by the Wendigo's. He blinks slowly.

"What?" He finally blurts. His erection has abated a bit. He feels like he's crawling through time as thick as molasses.

Hannibal takes Will's hand and brings it to his mouth, gently pressing the fingertips to his lips. Will's breath comes out rushed now. He can almost imagine it, the warmth and wetness of Hannibal's mouth on his digits, sucking gently and roughly alternatingly. There'd be teeth no doubt. He can picture it in his mind, Hannibal slipping Will's hard length in his mouth and sucking on it hungrily, making small choking noises at the back of his throat. Will can almost feel his fingers dragging in Hannibal's hair, pushing his head down so the man can swallow him whole.

And suddenly, Will is hot, hard as a rock again and leaking all over his stomach and now Hannibal's, and he's wanton and he's thinking that it's a pity he hasn't tried getting high with Hannibal Lecter before and what a pity too that he hates him so now that he has to cut him out and God *oh God he wants Hannibal to go down on him and it's sick and perverse and…*

"Do you want to leave scars on me?" Hannibal repeats. Will slips his left arm around Hannibal's shoulders, pulling him close and slides the pad of his fingers on the burn on Hannibal's back. Hannibal tenses but doesn't even whine though it must hurt terribly.

"I don't know what you gave me but I feel fucking wonderful. Can't even feel the pain anymore." Will mutters. He's licking at the corner of Hannibal's lips. It tastes like death and sunshine. He's definitely high as a kite.

"Language" Hannibal gently chastises. "I must leave you a few minutes to settle things with Chiyoh, but I will be back shortly. Will you be alright?" Will thinks it's absurd that Hannibal looks this glorious without a shirt on.

"Of course, doc." Will winks at Hannibal.

And then Will is alone, horny and high, and he can hear voices in the next room. He strains to listen.

"Help me get him some clothes, will you?"

"You'd let yourself get caught if only to spend just a little more time with him, wouldn't you? Why didn't you run with him when you had him in Florence?" Chiyoh asks, accusingly. If she's disturbed by the fact Hannibal is half-dressed beaten and burnt, she doesn't mention it.

"He likes plaid, too much for my taste but it does suit his nature." Hannibal responds, ignoring Chiyoh's question completely.

“Hannibal.” Chiyoh says, voice hard. The rest of the conversation is lost on Will and soon enough his nurse is back with a pile of soft wash-worn clothes that smell like Will and winter and a bit of his dogs, too. God does he miss his dogs.

“Come here.” Will mutters. He feels completely unashamed of being naked and wanting. He grabs at Hannibal surprisingly roughly given his condition and closes the gap between them, pressing his lips to Hannibal’s bobbing Adam apple and biting down.

“I want to rub myself all over you.” Will breathes in Hannibal’s ear.

“You are having a reaction to the mix of drugs Cordell and I administered to you, Will.”

“Really. Here I thought I was being smooth and flirty.” A small smile teases Hannibal’s lips.

“Does Chiyoh usually watch?” Will asks, glancing over Hannibal’s shoulder in the hallway. Chiyoh is half-hidden in darkness but she’s keeping an eye on them. And it’s a bit perverse how Will would welcome a kiss from her too if she’d offer it. Or a bite. Violence is truly the only thing he understands, he muses. Probably the price for walking inside the heads of the vilest of men.

Hannibal turns, obscuring Will’s nakedness from Chiyoh’s dispassionate gaze and utters a few words, most probably in Japanese, Will muses. Chiyoh frowns but nods and leaves. A few seconds later, the front door snaps shut. They’re alone.

“Let me start the shower. I’m afraid we’ll have to share if we both want hot water.” Hannibal explains.

“You never let go, do you. You afraid you’re going to break me more than you’ve broken me already?” Will muses, a lazy hand tugging at his hard length. He wishes he could feel ashamed of needing the touch so badly, but he’s past all of this.

Will can see Hannibal’s shoulder tense and suddenly he’s pushed roughly against the bathroom door. Hannibal all but claws his way into Will’s mouth, all rough teeth and jaw and warm, wet tongue.

Will manages a shallow breath before clutching at Hannibal’s open shirt and pulling him closer still to lick at his mouth until it opens up for him, warm and welcoming and feral and lethal.

Hannibal grunts into his mouth and Will chuckles.

The steam rising from the shower fills the room like a thick fog that clings to Will’s naked skin.

“You’re entirely overdressed for the rest of the program, Dr Lecter.” Will says as Hannibal buries his face in his curls and neck and then there’s a mouth on his nipple, biting down, hard. *Fuck.*

“Undress me then.”

“Bastard.” Will mumbles before trying to tug Hannibal’s shirt down his arms. The fabric clings on the bandage on his back, causing the man to hiss in pain.

Will’s hands make their way to Hannibal’s belt buckle, swiftly undoing it, letting its weight drag the pants down his hips. The man isn’t wearing any underwear. Will slides his left hand in the pants and caresses the hard length he finds there. Hannibal’s breath hitches and he closes his eyes involuntarily. The pants slide down his legs further as he spreads his legs to accommodate Will’s movements. Will mumbles, annoyed and finally just kneels down to discard the offensive item, pulling inefficiently at the fabric until Hannibal actually decides to help and toes off the pants, kicking them in the corner. They’re both completely naked now and it feels like the air between them is buzzing with an electric current.

“I’m afraid you’re not in your normal state of mind and you will resent me later on.” Hannibal mutters. Will is licking at his earlobe and his neck, immensely proud of himself when he elicits small mewling noises from Hannibal while his hand tugs lazily at the other man’s cock.

“Maybe you should have tried drugging me before. Might have been less work to get me naked than to cut through my skull with a bone saw.” It’d be so much easier to blame it on the drugs, but that hunger that’s making Will want to crawl out of his own skin and into Hannibal’s has only been set free by whatever cocktail is currently fueling his veins.

They’re walking back towards the shower, stepping in it with little grace, Hannibal grabbing at the wall for support when Will stumbles and catches himself around his shoulders. Hannibal spins them around so that Will is under the spray. He’s mindful of not wetting the bandages he’s applied to Will’s wounds but he fears he’ll have to change them anyway. Plus, it’s very hard to keep his focus on bandages when Will Graham is moaning loudly from Hannibal jerking him off under the warm spray. With each upstroke, Hannibal’s thumb swipes at Will’s frenulum.

“Fuck, Hannibal.” Will whines, his head thrown back, hitting the tiles softly, wet curls clinging to his forehead. Hannibal pauses to watch him. His Will is truly a work of art, long dark lashes casting a shadow on cheekbones, full lips parted slightly, panting. His beautiful chest is marred by scars, most of them Hannibal’s doing. It’s intoxicating to write a story like that on Will.

“Do you know what kintsugi is, Will?” Will’s eyes open, appraising Hannibal as the warm water sluices down his tired, battered skin. He cocks his head to the side as if realizing for the first time that he’s not alone in the shower.

“Are we really going to talk about foreign vocabulary while your hand is on my cock?” Will’s breath saws out of him when Hannibal steps closer to him, hand leaving his cock to wrap around his hip, pressing them together, nosing at that delicious sanctified place where jaw meets neck and ear.

“Kintsugi is the ancient art of putting back broken objects together by melding the fracture lines with gold or silver.” Hannibal whispers in Will’s ear, ending the sentence with a bite to Will’s earlobe. He’s finding it harder and harder to concentrate on anything with Will’s hands roaming on his back, mindful of the burn, fingers teasing the cleft of his ass, pinching and

caressing his ass cheeks. Will is humming his approval as the water creates lubrication between their lengths.

“Is that your way of saying we should embrace our scars?” He’s panting now, rocking his hips slowly into Hannibal’s as the other man’s hands tangle in his hair, angling his face so he can brush their lips together in soft, hungry kisses.

“Scars are our history.” Hannibal agrees. Their breath is mingling as Hannibal stares into Will’s open eyes.

“Harder.” Will mutters. His hands dig into Hannibal’s ass, wantonly using him to rub himself off. Their cocks are drenched in precum but they both feel almost too tired to do anything really useful about their position, just rocking into one another in a remarkably lazy dance. For a long moment, they just stand there, gazing into the other’s eyes, their cocks rubbing together, smearing precum on their stomachs. It’d dirty and warm and fucking amazing but slow and soft and dizzying all at the same time. It’s like neither of them is really in any hurry to come undone, unwilling to beat the other to a swift knee-weakening orgasm.

“I wanted to cut out the part of me that wants you, that wants to be you, that craves you.” Will breathes out.

“I tried doing the same.”

“Quite literally, too.” Will sighs. “How will this ever end?”

“Us?”

“Yes.” The warm water feels blissful. Will closes his eyes and presses his face into Hannibal’s neck, sucking and biting at the skin he finds there. Hannibal smells so good, so familiar. It’s like crawling back into bed in the middle of the night to find the pillow all fresh but the blankets all warm and cozy.

“In blood and chaos.”

“Why do you want me? What’s so special about me?” Will asks.

“Because I’m selfish. Because you’re extraordinary.”

Silence stretches between them like molasses. Hannibal’s hands are gentle, strong fingers massaging his neck and shoulders. They could stay like that forever, perhaps, held in stasis in time.

“Why do I want you? I shouldn’t want you. I feel like an addict given his first dose of heroin in months.” Will babbles, his mouth finding the sharp angle of Hannibal’s jaw. His muscles feel like rubber, his knees weak. He almost starts shaking when Hannibal suddenly pulls back from him, his hips jerking weakly, seeking friction once more. But then Hannibal is on his knees in front of him and Will thinks he might pass out.

Hannibal settles his hands on Will’s hips, thumbs rubbing hypnotizing patterns inside the hipbones, close enough to Will’s leaking cock that Will wants to whine and beg.

“Do you trust me?” Hannibal asks, gazing up at Will with something that can only be called adoration. And it’s a heady aphrodisiac.

“I shouldn’t.” Will’s breath rushes out of him when Hannibal’s mouth takes his cock in, warm, wet, pliant.

“Blowing your patients isn’t very professional.” Will moans, one hand bracing against the tile of the shower, the other finding its way into Hannibal’s wet hair, roughly tangling in the strands, trying to control the movement as his length disappears and reappears between the man’s lips. And he’s sucking at the tip and his tongue is twirling around and Will thinks he might just die there from sensory overload. And of course, the bastard doesn’t let him control anything, his hands holding Will back so he can decide how far he takes him and how much he licks and sucks and *fuck. There are teeth too, gently pressing against the base of Will’s cock. Will should be impressed that Hannibal can swallow him whole, but right now he’s more trying to restart his brain which has blanked out from the fact his cock is halfway down his shrink’s, best friend’s, best enemy’s throat. The teeth are just a reminder, a bizarrely erotic caress, no warning at all, just a demonstration of power and fuck if it doesn’t make Will whimper like a schoolgirl.*

Hannibal suddenly pulls back, his mouth making a loud plop as it releases Will’s cock, his tongue licking at the vein under.

“I want to come on your face.” Will breathes. “I want to rip you open and wear you. I want you in me. I want to bite your lips. I want to fuck you until you can’t walk. I want to draw all of my scars on your skin with my tongue…” Will isn’t making much sense anymore and the words are tumbling out of his mouth like a litany, each desire more twisted and dark and overwhelming as the previous.

His words are harsh whispers that reverberates on the tiles, ones that nearly undo Hannibal. Hannibal is never undone. Cannot be undone, shouldn’t allow himself to ever be. And yet these confessions of Will’s of wanton desire to own him, mark him, make him his nearly are enough to push him over the edge. He starts working at Will’s cock with both hands and mouth, fingers deftly caressing his sack, sucking greedily on the flesh like it’s ambrosia. And it is, to Hannibal.

Will is swearing now, his mind narrowed on a single idea.

“I…” Will whines. His hand is clutching gracelessly at Hannibal’s hair, trying to show him what he needs. Hannibal won’t have it and selfishly keeps control of the situation, feeling Will’s sack tighten, his red cock straining against his hungry lips.

Will whimpers, his own hand guiding Hannibal’s back to his cock, rubbing Hannibal’s thumb with his own on his frenulum, sliding roughly against the vein underneath, then on the head, rubbing slow, burning circles. The head of his cock breaches Hannibal’s lips and he sucks hard. And *fuck, getting a blowjob from your therapist, friend, serial killer really should not feel that good. It’s almost criminal. Will almost laughs out loud at the pun but he feels like he’s about to die because those fingers that have killed, those damned fingers he’s seen wielding a kitchen knife and playing the fucking harpsichord, those hands he’s obsessed over for the past two years are jerking him off roughly, just the way he likes it, a thumb swiping*

against the sensitive head on every upstroke, the thumb and index wrapping and squeezing just a bit too hard at the base. Hannibal's mouth and hands seem to be everywhere at once. And there's a lot of tongue and sucking and nibbling bites on the inside of his thigh and fuck.

And then Will is falling over the precipice, thick ribbons of semen splashing over Hannibal's cheek and lips and hair and Will slides boneless to the bottom of the tub on his knees, his mouth seeking Hannibal's out, licking his own come off the man's face, rubbing it on the skin as their faces collide, teeth clashing, jaws working frantically to swallow the other whole. And Hannibal groans, an animal groan, his hand going for his own straining erection which he's managed to ignore until now and Will's hand is on his, guiding him, jerking him off roughly, tugging almost to the point of pain. There's a rough thumb on the wet slit and Hannibal couldn't tell if it's his or Will's at this point. Just that it's blissful and dirty and hot and he'd murder every last person on earth just to do this one more time.

Hannibal closes his eyes and grunts as his orgasm overtakes him. The French call it *la petite mort, and really, it is as apt a name as any, because it does feel like dying and being born again in the next breath. Will's forehead is pressed to his and their hands are entwined and their knees and thighs are trembling from the effort of keeping themselves up. The water from the showerhead pelts on their skin and they stay there, Hannibal half lying over Will at the bottom of the tub, trying to catch back their breath.*

"You won't remember most of what happened tonight." Hannibal whispers into Will's skin. As if *that was the deal-breaker.*

"I don't want to remember tonight." Will snarls. He almost sees something that looks like pain in Hannibal's eyes when Hannibal pulls back to look at him.

Watching Will like this is almost as pleasurable as killing. Because Will is his, completely and fully, if only for a few stolen moments. The power he can exert on him with just his hands and lips and tongue. On a whim, Hannibal bends down and licks then suckles on one of Will's nipples, as if trying to convince him that he should want to remember.

"Chiyoh called us *Nakama." Will mumbles, lazily playing with Hannibal's hair. By all means, they should wash before the water runs cold on them, but they just cannot bring themselves to move just yet.*

"*Nakama. Yes." Hannibal agrees. It feels like ages before they untwine from one another, crawling to their feet slowly, slipping under the warm spray. All of Will's bandages are a mess but neither of them really cares by now. Hannibal grabs the soap and starts to wash Will, slowly, methodically. Will only leans his head against Hannibal's shoulder, too tired to protest.*

"Lift your head a bit, so I can wash your hair." Hannibal mutters, ages later. His hands are incredibly careful roaming Will's body, fingers massaging sore muscles with soapy suds.

"You're all blurry" Will complains when Hannibal starts massaging his scalp with shampoo, taking great care to avoid the wounds on Will's face.

"That would be the sedatives."

“I like to see you all disheveled. Makes you look more human.” Will comments, a lazy smile on his lips as Hannibal helps him to rinse the shampoo out of his curls. Hannibal then cleans himself, efficient and fast, hissing in pain when he exchanges place with Will under the showerhead to rinse the soap and shampoo off. The water pelts on the burn on his back and he almost welcomes the pain. The water starts running cold and Hannibal lets it. It is the best remedy for a burn, after all, to cool the skin down. But then, Will is shivering, nipples tight on his scarred chest, so he turns off the tap and wraps them both in thick towels, helping Will sit down on the toilet lid once more, to towel dry his hair. Hannibal wraps his own towel around his hips and breath rushes out of him when Will’s lips press over his navel.

“Now I know what you taste like, Dr Lecter.” Will murmurs. He looks exhausted as if all fight and anger and passion has been drained out of him.

“You always look so painfully human.” Hannibal murmurs, caressing Will’s wet hair soothingly. It’s a curse and a blessing that most of this, Will won’t remember come morning. Hannibal leaves him sitting there to slip into a fresh shirt borrowed from Will’s vast collection of plaid. It smells like Will, his infuriating aftershave that Hannibal has come to tolerate, and his dogs and clean laundry detergent. It’s tight on the shoulders and the sleeves are too short, but under a vest, it won’t show. The rest of the clothes were borrowed from Mason’s extensive wardrobe. They fit rather well, all things considered.

There is already a bit of light on the horizon, a lighter tint of grey painting the sky through the windows of the main room. Hannibal helps Will into clean clothes and helps him from the bathroom to the bed.

“There’s room enough for two.” Will suggests. And Hannibal is tempted because Will looks fragile and strong at the same time and so welcoming. Will looks like the place Hannibal would want to curl up into at the end of the world. But there is Chiyoh to tend to, famously patient Chiyoh, and things to be done and arranged before the end.

“You need your rest.” Hannibal responds, brushing away curls from Will’s forehead.

“You know…I did forgive you. And perhaps that makes me just as much a monster as you. But I did and I do. I forgive you.” Will mutters, sleepily closing his eyes under the soothing caress of Hannibal’s hand.

In a few minutes, Will is asleep, his breath even, no crease on his forehead. The blissful sleep of the somewhat innocent.

“I know.” Hannibal murmurs before slipping on a coat and stepping out the door. And it shouldn’t feel like a goodbye, because it isn’t. But Hannibal knows deep down that the teacup has shattered and it won’t ever be the same again, kintsugi or not. One can glue back the pieces together, it will always only be just a facsimile of what the teacup used to be. It will always be different from what it used to be.

I forgive you.

Me too.

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